

Tennessee Department of Education Tennessee School Support System (TSSS)

I. Purpose

Each State shall establish a statewide system of intensive and sustained support and improvement for local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools in order to increase the opportunity for all students served by those agencies and schools to meet the State's academic content standards and student academic achievement standards.

There is an urgent need for technical assistance to be provided for local educational agencies and schools facing rigorous new academic standards within a strict accountability context. The convergence of requirements from both the state and federal levels in which remedial consequences result within two years requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to present a design for support services for school districts incorporating diverse and flexible strategies.

Priorities for service in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) "No Child Left Behind of 2001" are described in Section 1117(a)(2):

(A) first, provide support and assistance to local educational agencies with schools subject to corrective action (probation) under section 1116 and assist those schools, in accordance with section 1116(b)(11), for which a local educational agency has failed to carry out its responsibilities under paragraphs (7) Corrective Action and (8) Restructuring of section 1116(b);

1116(b)(11) Corrective Agreement.-In any case described in paragraph (1)(E), (5)(A), (7)(C)(i), or (810)(A)(i), or subsection (c)(10)(vii) if all public schools served by the local educational agency to which a child may transfer are identified for school improvement, corrective action or restructuring, the agency shall, to the extent practicable, establish a cooperative agreement with other local educational agencies in the area for a transfer.

(B) second, provide support and assistance to other local educational agencies with schools identified as in need of improvement under section 1116(b) School Improvement; and

(C) third, provide support and assistance to other local educational agencies and schools participating under this part that need support and assistance in order to achieve the purpose of this part.

II. Structure

Exemplary educators, regional consortia and the LEA consortium are the entities providing technical assistance and support services to Tennessee schools that are not making adequate yearly progress.

Those schools that fail to meet standards set by the State Board of Education are designated as “on notice schools”. They receive weekly intensive on-site services through the Tennessee Exemplary Educator (EE) Program for the purpose of providing additional support to those schools in greatest need of increasing student achievement. Outstanding Tennessee educators are trained to provide these schools with effective, ongoing assistance that will focus on high expectations and success for all students. The primary focus is on improved teaching and learning. Participants will achieve this through modeling lessons, mentoring, and assisting educational leaders and school councils in the reduction of barriers to change.

Technical assistance for Title I schools will be provided through regional consortia LEAs and the LEA consortium, each under the leadership of a regional Federal Programs consultant or by an Exemplary Educator assigned by the Commissioner of Education after a school is identified as “on notice/probation”.

Regional consortia and the LEA consortium will plan their own continuum of support services for schools based on annual assessment of needs and resources. .

III. Resources

The resources for the Tennessee School Support System are a collaborative effort of the State Department of Education, LEAs and individual schools. The State will make a large in-kind contribution through the administration of the Exemplary Educator Program and time devoted by the Office of Federal Programs Nashville consultant and its regional staff to school systems.

To implement Tennessee School Support System fully, the Department will contract with the University of Memphis to provide technical assistance on school improvement initiatives and to act as the vendor for state-sponsored professional development

activities. The resources for the contractual vendor arrangements with the University of Memphis will be subsidized by the 5% the State may use out of its Title I school improvement funds and other designated resources.

IV. Roles of Different Personnel

Exemplary Educators: The Tennessee Exemplary Educators Program has been initiated by the Division of Accountability to provide assistance to those schools identified as having the greatest need to improve student achievement. The Department of Education, in collaboration with Appalachian Education Laboratory, Incorporated (AEL), selects and provides training to a cadre of recently retired educators for the purpose of conducting school improvement activities. Exemplary Educators work for the Department as independent contractors and assist participating schools by facilitating the development and implementation of the School Improvement Plan, modeling innovative teaching strategies, serving as mentors to principals and teachers, analyzing student performance data, connecting schools with professional development providers and building capacity for continuous school improvement. These individuals, assigned by the Commissioner of Education, begin working with a school once it is identified by the State as “on notice/school improvement 2”. The EE will work with the school until the school makes two years of adequate yearly progress.

Federal Program Regional Consultants: Federal Programs consultants have been assigned to provide technical assistance to specified LEAs/schools across the State. Federal Programs consultants will obtain comprehensive information about a school’s operational procedures, educational programs, grants and funding. If schools move further into sanctions, Federal Programs consultants will collaborate with State facilitators and EEs to determine what technical assistance may be provided.

Consortium of LEAs: A Federal Programs regional consultant is assigned to a consortium of LEAs to work directly with each LEA individually and the consortium as a group. The Federal Programs regional consultant will collaborate with LEAs and ESEA “No Child Left Behind” project directors located in Nashville when more specific technical assistance is needed.

Regional School Support System: Each region of the state will coordinate its LEA regional consortia to form regional school support systems. Each of these regional school support systems will have a list of approved independent consultants with specific areas of expertise that schools and school districts can utilize to obtain technical assistance.

School Support Teams**: Each school support team established shall be composed of persons knowledgeable about scientifically based research and practices on teaching and learning, and about successful schoolwide projects, school reform and improving educational opportunities for low achieving students, including--

- (i) highly qualified or distinguished teachers and principals;
- (ii) pupil services personnel;
- (iii) parents;
- (iv) representatives of institutions of higher education;
- (v) representatives of regional educational laboratories or comprehensive regional technical assistance centers;
- (vi) representatives of outside consultant groups;
or
- (vii) other individuals as the State educational agency, in consultation with the local educational agency, may determine appropriate.

School support teams shall perform the functions as described in Section 1117(a)(5)(B). Each school support team shall---

- (i) review and analyze all facets of the school's operation, including the design and operation of the instructional program, and assist the school in developing recommendations for improving student performance in that school;
- (ii) collaborate with parents, school staff and the local educational agency serving the school in the design, implementation, and monitoring of a plan that, if fully implemented, can reasonably be expected to improve student performance and help the school meet its goals for improvement, including adequate yearly progress under section 1111(b)(2)(B);

(iii) evaluate, at least semiannually; the effectiveness of school personnel assigned to the school, including identifying outstanding teachers and principals, and make findings and recommendations to the school, the local educational agency, and where appropriate, the State educational agency.

(iv) make additional recommendations as the school implements the plan described in clause (ii) to local educational agency and the State educational agency concerning additional assistance that is needed by the school or the school support team.

** There will be a coordinated effort to assemble school support teams. The Federal Programs regional consultant will assist school districts, when requested, or when a school is identified in school improvement status.

LEA: For each school identified for school improvement, the local educational agency serving the school shall ensure the provision of technical assistance as the school develops and implements the school plan throughout the plan's duration. Such specific assistance--

(i) shall include assistance in analyzing data from the assessments required under section 1111(b)(3), and other examples of student work, to identify and address, problems in instruction and problems, if any, in implementing the parental involvement requirement described in section 1118, the professional development requirement described in section 1119, and the responsibilities of the school and local educational agency under the school plan, and to identify and address solutions to these problems;

(ii) shall include assistance in identifying and implementing professional development, instructional strategies, and methods of instruction that are based on scientifically based research and that have proven effective in addressing the specific instructional issues that caused the school to be identified for school improvement;

(iii) shall include assistance in analyzing and revising the school's budget so that the school's resources are more effectively allocated to the activities most likely to increase student academic achievement and to remove the school from school improvement status; and

(iv) may be provided—

(I) by the local educational agency, through mechanisms authorized under section 1117; or

(II) by the State educational agency, an institution of higher education, a private not-for-profit organization, an educational service agency, or another entity with experience in helping schools improve academic achievement.

Independent Consultants: Individuals, with appropriate expertise, as identified by the regional Federal Programs may participate as school support team members. These persons may also conduct group professional development training, schoolwide planning and follow-up work at the school sites. Independent consultants paid per diem and expenses as contracted by the LEA or school.

V. Levels of Service

There are three levels of service provided.

Level 1 services are for all schools. One statewide professional development theme or focus will be selected for study each year, as coordinated by the designated Office of Federal Programs. consultant in Nashville. This theme or focus will be based on identified needs.

Level 2 services are provided for schools designated as “school improvement/school improvement 1” and “on notice/school improvement 2”. Assistance will be provided by the LEA staff, Federal Programs regional consultants and Exemplary Educators (for schools on notice/school improvement 2).

Level 3 services are provided to schools in greatest need, those that are “on probation/corrective action 1” and “corrective action/restructuring”. These schools are assigned an Exemplary Educator who makes regular on-site visits and assists in planning, implementation, and monitoring of school improvement activities.

VI. Chart

| Heads Up | School Improvement SI-1 | Notice SI-2 | Probation Corrective Action-1 | Corrective Action Restructuring | Alternative Governance Alternative Governance |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 3 | Level 3 |
| After First Year of Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress (Beginning Year 2) | After Second Year of Not Making Adequate Progress (Beginning Year 3) | After Third Year of Not Making Adequate Progress (Beginning Year 4) | After Fourth Year of Not Making Adequate Progress (Beginning Year 5) | After Fifth Year of Not Making Adequate Progress (Beginning Year 6) | After Sixth Year of Not Making Adequate Progress (Beginning Year 7) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Parent Notification *Public School Choice *Revise SIP *Plan with Outside Expert *Technical Assistance *Peer Review of SIP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Joint Study of School System (SDE & Comptroller) *SDE Approval of state discretionary grants to schools *SDE provides technical assistance through outside expert *Revision of SIP *Parent Notification *Public School Choice *Supplementary Services *Technical Assistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *SDE Approve School System's Allocation of Resources to School *Appoint Local Review Committee to Approve & Monitor SIP *Performance Contract for Principal *Incorporate Joint Study Findings in SIP *Public Notification & Dissemination *Public School Choice *Technical Assistance *Supplemental Services *Implement Corrective Action *Replace staff *New curriculum *Significantly decrease management authority at the school *Appoint outside expert *Restructure internal organization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *SDE Approves School System's Allocation of Financial Resources to School *SDE Approves Allocation of Personnel Resources of School *SDE Presents Options for School to Plan for Alternative Governance/LEA Develops Plan for Alternative Governance *Public School Choice *Technical Assistance *Supplemental Services *Continue to Implement Corrective Action *Public Notification and Dissemination *Prepare a Plan and Make Necessary Arrangements for Alternative Governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Prompt Notification of Affected Teachers & Parents *Technical Assistance *Implement Alternative Governance *Reopen as public charter school *Replace all or most of relevant school staff *Contract with a private management company *State takeover *Any other major restructuring <p>The Commissioner assumes any and all powers of governance of the school</p> |
| LEA Staff SDE (Federal Programs) | LEA Staff SDE (Federal Programs) | LEA Staff SDE (Federal Programs) EEs | LEA Staff SDE (Accountability) EEs | | |

| SI Improving | Notice Improving | Probation Improving | Corrective Action Improving |
|--|---|--|--|
| Level 2 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 3 |
| Made AYP after being identified for school improvement | Made AYP after being identified on notice | Made AYP after being identified for probation | Made AYP after being identified for corrective action |
| *Parent Notification *Public School Choice *Technical Assistance | *Parent Notification *Public School Choice *Supplementary Services *Technical Assistance | *Public Notification & Dissemination *Public School Choice *Technical Assistance *Supplemental Services *Continue First Year Corrective Action | *Public School Choice *Technical Assistance *Supplemental Services *Continue to Implement Corrective Action *Public Notification and Dissemination *Prepare a Plan and Make Necessary Arrangements for Alternative Governance |
| LEA Staff SDE (Federal Programs) | LEA Staff SDE (Federal Programs) EEs | LEA Staff SDE (Accountability) EEs | |